

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CARSON of Indiana addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO FOUR BRAVE MEN OF U.S. ARMY'S 160TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS AVIATION REGIMENT

(Mr. COOPER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to four remarkable men, four brave men from the U.S. Army's 106th Special Operations Aviation Regiment who gave their lives recently while in service to our country.

On Thursday, January 30, 2003, the four-member crew was participating in training operations near Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan when their MH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crashed. The elite Night Stalker 160 SOAR unit, which is stationed at Fort Campbell near my home district in Tennessee, honored these four aviators at a memorial service last week. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mark O'Steen, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Thomas Gibbons, Staff Sergeant Daniel Leon Kisling, Jr., and Sergeant Gregory Michael Frampton were remembered as deeply patriotic and devoted family men.

Their tragic loss will not be forgotten among family members, friends or fellow soldiers that they left behind, nor will it fade from the memories of those who live and work in Fort Campbell. Each of these men made the greatest sacrifice a soldier can make, to give his life for the cause of preserving our freedom.

I thank them for serving our country proudly and honorably.

□ 1745

LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING DELTA BLACK BELT REGIONAL AUTHORITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight on behalf of the 635,000 citizens in my congressional district, which is one of the three poorest congressional districts in the United States of America. As we focus on this budget and all the pressing economic needs in our country, we ought to remember that there is a class of Americans whose needs often go unaddressed in this body and elsewhere. It is the millions of Americans who live in the Black Belt of the South, or the Delta Region of the South.

Just yesterday, I introduced legislation that I hope will crystallize attention on this problem that has gone for

too long without a voice. We have a Delta Regional Authority in this country that is very ably led by Pete Johnson of the State of Mississippi. I seek to expand that authority to create a Delta Black Belt Regional Authority, and I seek that this body make a commitment that would be unprecedented in terms of its investment of resources in the southern and central parts of this country.

This legislation, if enacted, would ask that \$100 million be appropriated in the first fiscal year to 552 counties and 14 States in this country of ours. I recognize that I come before this Congress asking that this commitment be made at a time when the priorities of the President are very different. Across the South we see economic development programs being cut. We see the enterprise communities and the empowerment zones that have been so critical in my State and so critical in the States of so many of my colleagues zeroed out, eliminated from funding. We see funding for rural hospitals cut back. Our priorities, I would submit, are firmly and fundamentally wrong on all these issues.

Too many people are losing their jobs. Too many companies are closing in the South. And I would submit that at this point we have two Souths. We have one that is prosperous, we have one that is growing, one that is in touch with the modern economy that we have. We have another one that is languishing; we have another one that has lagged behind. It is the second South that I represent in the seventh district of Alabama.

We need to make a commitment that when 40 percent of the people in various counties live in poverty, we need to make a commitment that when too many children in the South live in school districts that are underfunded, that we put their concerns at the top of our agenda. We can talk all we want about economic development, but until we find ways to grow the physical infrastructure of the South and, more importantly, capitalize and build the human infrastructure of the South, we will see two Souths. We will see the South that I represent lag behind.

When the President talks about compassionate conservatism, he does it with great eloquence. But his budget-makers need to meet his speech-makers. We need to make a commitment that we will put resources and that we will give these resources a chance to work in a part of our country that has gone ignored.

This legislation, and I have circulated "Dear Colleague" letters to many of the Members of the House, has a chance of passage if we remember two priorities: First of all, that this entire country is anchored and weighted down if the rural South continues to lag; and second of all, that no country can be strong when too many of the people who live in its borders are weak. No country can be strong when too many of the people who live in its bor-

ders are weak. There is too much weakness in the South tonight. There is too much poverty in the South tonight. And it is time that we make an unprecedented national commitment in this area.

This legislation would do one final thing. It would give local communities, through a constituent representation board that I would put in this legislation, it would give them an opportunity to control 20 percent of the funding that would be allocated to this new authority. It is important that the people who live on the ground, who do the work in our community and faith-based organizations have a chance to control and direct resources. It is important that they have an opportunity to control the way Federal funds are spent. Too many people are locked out of this process. Too many people are in situations where their voices go unheard as we think about how we spend economic development dollars.

So I speak tonight on behalf of the rural South. I speak on behalf of the millions of children who live in poverty in that region, and I call for a national commitment beyond any that we have made.

IN SUPPORT OF MIGUEL ESTRADA'S CONFIRMATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, the history of our Nation was forged in the balmy summer of 1787 in what was at the time the statehouse of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. There the geniuses who created the Constitution of the United States created three separate branches of government and a system of checks and balances within that government that would provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and ensure the blessings of liberty for not only themselves but we, their posterity.

Central to that balance of power, Mr. Speaker, was the notion of an independent judiciary, which, at the level of the Federal Court, would be governed by the appointment of the President of the United States. But again it was not without checks and balances, Mr. Speaker, because the Senate itself, under the Constitution, was given the authority to review the qualifications of individuals that the chief executive would appoint for the judiciary.

And so our Nation proceeded from the basement home of the Supreme Court, which is still in this building today, back when it met just off the House Chamber for one day a year, to the august building and the awesome legacy of the U.S. Supreme Court today. And yet, Mr. Speaker, somewhere along the way, about the time of my youth, our Supreme Court seems, as it has done at different times in its history, the Dred Scott case comes to mind, the Supreme Court seems to